

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, February 18, 2016. The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Rebecca Ebert, Bill Hottel, Karen Helm, Kristen Laise, Eric Campbell, Eddie Richard, Priya Patel, Sharon Farinholt

Board Members Absent: Dan Martin

Staff: Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Bob Hess, Frederick County Board of Supervisors; Jennifer Bell, Old Town Winchester; Josh Janney, Winchester Star

Call To Order: Ms. Rebecca Ebert, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The January 2016 minutes were approved on a motion by Eric Campbell, seconded by Kristen Laise.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns was not present at the meeting, so Board Chairman Ms. Rebecca Ebert and the board reviewed the printed report he prepared in advance.

New Business:

2017 Budget Update

The board reviewed Addendum A, with progress on discussions to increase the tourism department's funding, and the possibility of the bed tax being raised. Mrs. Helm asked how much of a percentage it would be raised, and Mrs. Bayliss replied that it is unknown at this time, but that any increase over the current Frederick County rate of 2% must be applied to tourism funding.

2015 Interested Visitor Survey

The board also discussed Addendum B regarding the Visitor Survey, which included highlights of the survey that was created to determine effectiveness of the CVB's marketing and the impact of visitors. All the data has not yet been analyzed, but will be presented at the March meeting.

Old Business:

2016 Visitors Guide production – Renee Bayliss

Mrs. Bayliss noted that production continues on the Visitors Guide, which has reached \$18,000 in ad sales. She estimates that the guide should be printed by mid-April.

ABC Licensing Update

Forms are being completed for the ABC licensing, and the local ABC representative made a site visit to the Visitors Center.

Public Comments

Mrs. Jennifer Bell informed the board of upcoming events in Old Town Winchester, including the St. Paddy's Day Celtic Festival and Winchester Restaurant Week. She also noted that Old Town is in the process of having the wayfinding signs replaced.

Mrs. Karen Helm announced that the Patsy Cline Historic House will open April 1. Ms. Kristen Laise discussed Belle Grove's Opening Day, and the plantation's new exhibit on slavery. Mr. Eric Campbell reminded the board that it is the 100th anniversary of the National Parks in 2016. The National Park Service's Visitor Contact Station will be open every day, starting the same day as Belle Grove. The board also discussed the Artisan Trail, which will hold an open house at Barns of Rose Hill to introduce Clarke County to the trail. Mr. Eddie Richard also informed the board of his plans to expand the pick-your-own flowers portion of Richard's Fruit Market.

Ms. Rebecca Ebert noted that her term on the board will be completed this June. Mr. Bill Hottel's term will also be expiring in June.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 am on a motion by Priya Patel, seconded by Eddie Richard.

Respectfully Submitted by Renee Bayliss, Visitor & Community Relations Specialist, City of Winchester